



## WELCOME TO THE WILD AND SCENIC SMITH RIVER

This guide to the Smith River is published by the California Department of Boating and Waterways in cooperation with the United States Forest Service (USFS), whose Smith River National Recreation Area manages most of the three main forks of the Smith River, numerous tributaries, and a short segment of the main stem. The remainder of the main stem flows through a combination of public and private lands and the Oregon segment of the North Fork is managed by the USFS, Siskiyou National Forest.

The Smith River is one of the crown jewels of the National Wild and Scenic River System, which recognizes and protects rivers across the country.

Approximately 300 miles of the Smith River system are designated wild and scenic, more than any other river in the country. The emerald-green Smith River flows freely and naturally, without a single dam, for its entire length — the only major river system in California to do so. The Secretary of the Interior named the Smith River and its tributaries as part of the national system in 1981.

The Smith River National Recreation Area (NRA), located in the Six Rivers National Forest in northwest California, is managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The NRA was created by Congress in 1990 to protect the area's special scenic value, natural diversity, cultural and historical attributes, wilderness, wildlife, fisheries, and the Smith River watershed's clean waters. The Forest Service has been designated as the steward of the NRA to provide recreational opportunities and to manage this diverse area and all of its valuable resources.

This guide was designed to enhance the enjoyment and safety of visitors to the Wild and Scenic Smith River, whether running the winter rapids, fishing, or enjoying a swim in the calmer summer-time waters of the Smith. Those wishing to navigate the whitewater trails of the Smith should obtain the map/guide entitled *Whitewater of the Smith River Watershed*, which contains information essential to kayaking, boating, and rafting on the Smith. Contact the Smith River NRA Visitor Center for maps and other information on the area.

## COME PLAY IN THE NRA!

The Smith River National Recreation Area invites you to a scenic playground encompassing more than 450 square miles of densely forested mountains, pristine botanical areas, remote wilderness landscapes, high-mountain lakes, and rocky canyons. Weaving through this natural wonderland are hundreds of miles of the Smith River's forks and streams, 75 miles of hiking trails, and several hundred miles of roads,

including 27 miles of the Smith River Scenic Byway. The NRA offers a year-round menu of recreational opportunities.

## SEASONAL HIGHLIGHTS



**WINTER:** fish watching, whitewater rafting and kayaking, steelhead and salmon fishing, waterfalls, snow in the high country, mushroom gathering.



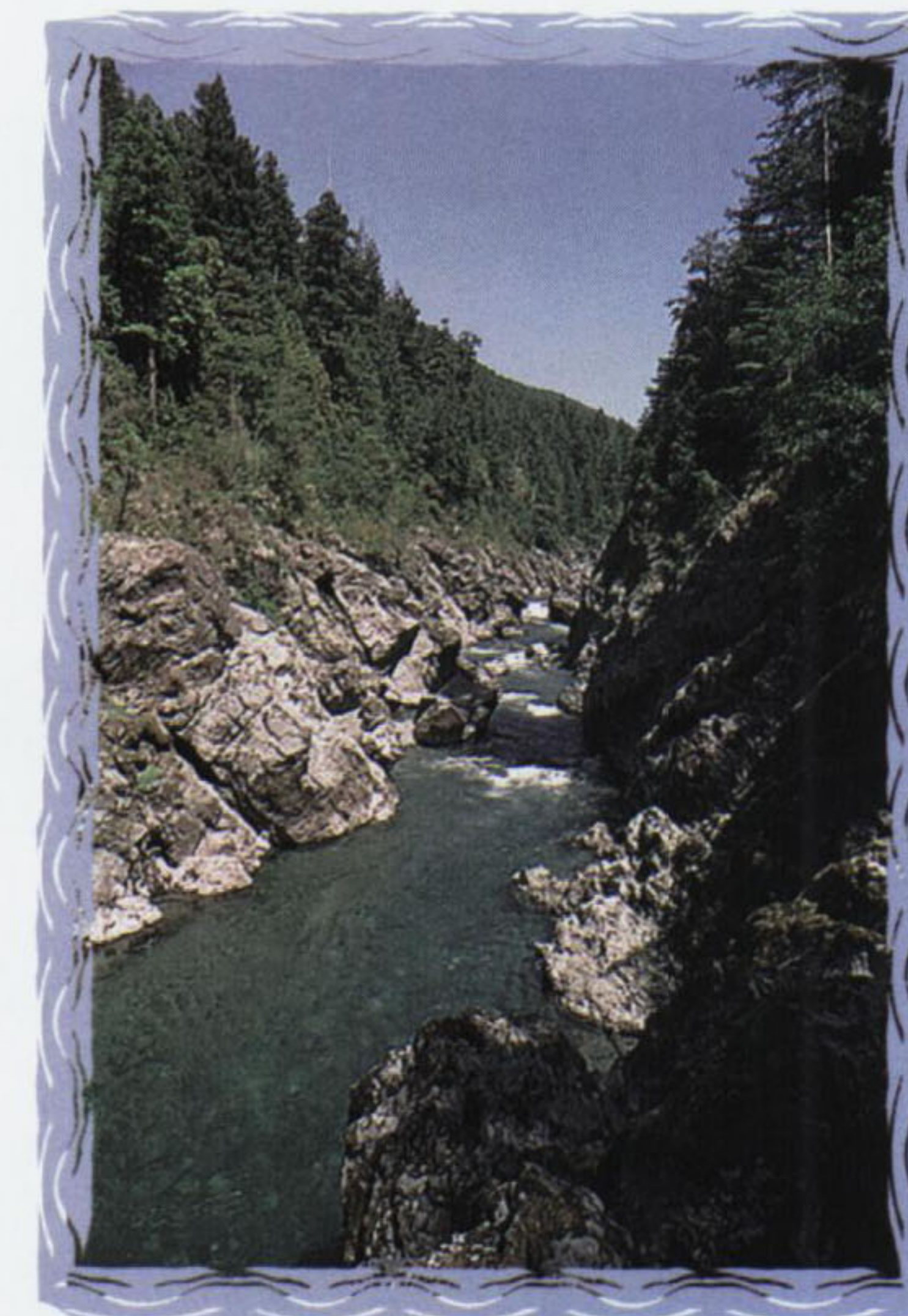
**SPRING:** blossoming Pacific Dogwoods, wild azaleas and rhododendrons, lady's slipper orchids, lilies, and more.



**SUMMER:** swimming or snorkeling in deep, natural pools of clear, emerald water; tubing and rafting on the main stem Smith; hiking back-country and wilderness trails like this trail to Island Lake.



**AUTUMN:** wonderful weather, fall colors, berry picking, mountain biking.



## A SCENIC BYWAY

The Smith River Scenic Byway along Highway 199 passes through four miles of impressive redwood forests, winds 27 miles along the awesome river for which it's named, and then continues into Oregon. The Byway presents spectacular views of rugged canyons, turbulent rapids, the confluence of the South and Middle Forks of the Smith River, plus historic and picturesque recreation sites such as Patrick Creek Campground. It also features the first bridge in the state of California named after a woman, Mary Adams Peacock, a pioneer who became famous for the hospitality she offered at her Mary Adams Station lodging facilities.

## WORLD-CLASS FISHING

The Smith River's natural fishery is one of its greatest assets, with more than 175 miles of anadromous fish habitat. The Smith has exceptional runs of salmon and steelhead. Salmon appear in late October and continue through December and there is good angler success. Steelhead start arriving in mid-December, and remain until late April or May. The fishing is not easy, but the rewards are great.

Anyone 16 years of age or older wishing to fish the Smith River must obtain a valid California state fishing license and a current fishing regulation guide and follow its rules on seasons, fish size and variety, bait, and other restrictions. For more information call California Department of Fish & Game (707) 464-2523.

## BOTANICAL AREAS

Four botanical areas in the NRA protect unique and outstanding botanical communities:



The **Myrtle Creek Botanical Area** features unique *Darlingtonia* bog plants and towering redwood trees.

The **Broken Rib Botanical Area** has a high concentration of many coniferous species.

The **Bear Basin Butte Botanical Area** contains 14 different types of evergreens, including the beautiful Brewer's spruce.



The **North Fork Botanical Area** hosts many rare plants and the fragrant wild azalea.

## CAMPING

The Smith River NRA features four developed campgrounds plus numerous opportunities for dispersed camping. Developed campgrounds have fire rings, tables, vault or flush toilets, parking pads, and drinking water (except for Big Flat). Camping limit: 2 weeks per year. **For reservations call toll free: (877)444-6777; TDD: (877)833-6777; INTL: (518)885-3639; Internet: ReserveUSA.com.**

**Panther Flat:** Fee charged. Open all year. Mile post 16.75 on Hwy. 199. Hot showers, flush toilets, drinking water, 39 sites (some barrier-free sites). Reservations accepted.

**Grassy Flat:** Fee charged. Open mid-May to mid-September. Mile post 18.87 on Hwy. 199. Vault toilets, drinking water, 19 sites. Reservations accepted.

**Patrick Creek:** Fee charged. Open mid-May to mid-September. Mile post 22.0 on Hwy. 199. Flush toilets, drinking water, 13 sites (some barrier-free sites). Reservations accepted.

**Big Flat:** Fee charged. Open mid-May to mid-September. Mile post 14.1 South Fork Road, left on #405 for .2 mile, left on 15N59. Vault toilets, no drinking water, no garbage service (pack in/pack out), 28 sites. No reservations.

**Dispersed Camping:** Permitted anywhere in the NRA except where specifically prohibited. Remember that no dispersed camping is allowed in Redwood National or State Park or on private lands. Camping limit in the Forest is 30 days per year. Campfire permit required for gas lanterns, camp stoves, campfires, or grills. Always make certain your campfire is DEAD OUT before you leave camp. Pick up and pack out all trash. Bury human waste 6-8" deep and at least 100' from any river or stream. Store food out of the reach of bears and other animals.

## STAY IN A LOOKOUT!



Want to experience a night at the top of Bear Basin Butte (elevation 5303') and see for yourself what life would be like for a fire fighter? A historic fire lookout and a new 1930s style cabin may be rented for one to seven nights between June 15 and September 30, with reservations taken after January 1 for the current year. Contact the NRA Visitor Center for information on this unique opportunity.